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Statement of East Timor solidarity groups to the Human Rights Committee of the Socialist International

In May this year, the Socialist International Council Meeting in Cairo adopted a resolution on East Timor drawing attention to the daily violation of human rights, arbitrary imprisonment, forced resettlement and the absence of basic rights of free association and free expression. In August, the UN Sub-commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities adopted a resolution on East Timor which drew attention to "gross human rights violations" and regretted that "restrictions (have been) imposed by the local military authorities upon the activities of specialised non-governmental organizations".

Since then human rights situation in East Timor has further deteriorated; the Indonesian forces of occupation have resorted to greater repression in an attempt to quell a new upsurge of resistance to Indonesian rule, especially among the younger generation of East Timorese in the towns and villages. There have been raids on schools and house-to-house searches, young people have been arrested and tortured, while masked and hooded men, disguised to conceal their identity as members of the security forces, roam the streets of Dili at night, beating Timorese and preventing freedom of movement during the hours of darkness.

The situation has been widely reported in the world media. New York Times reporter, Steve Erlanger described East Timor as a "sad and terrifying place" (NYT, 21 October). The Sidney Morning Herald (30 October) reported that Indonesia has increased the number of troops in the capital to quell anti-Indonesian protest, while Agence France Press (28 october) reported, "Never before has the situation been so terrible and so tense". Several foreign journalists quoted diplomats who visited East Timor in October as describing the situation they witnessed as being "very grim".

Your meeting in Lisbon provides the opportunity for a new international initiative to focus on the plight of the East timorese. We call upon you to examine the evidence, make a careful assessment and identify specific actions that can be taken by socialist parties throughout the world in support of the East Timoreses. In particular, it is important to bring pressure to bear on the Indonesian authorities to allow a team of independent observers to visit East Timor for the purpose of examining the human rights situation. Such a visit would provide reliable information for presentation to the UN Commission on Human Rights meeting in february 1991 which has been asked by its Sub-Commision to consider human rights and fundamental freedoms in East Timor.

7th December, 1990

A PAZ É POSSIVEL EM TIMOR-LESTE (Portugal).
AUSTRALIA EAST TIMOR ASSOCIATION (Australia)
AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR OVERSEAS AID (Australia)
CANADIAN EAST TIMOR ALERT NETWORK (Canada)
COMISSÃO PARA OS DIREITOS DO POVO MAUBERE (Portugal)
FREE EAST TIMOR COALITION (Japan)
INDONESIA KOMMITTEE (Holland)
OSTTIMORKOMMITÉN (Sweden)
PAZ E JUSTIÇA PARA TIMOR-LESTE (Portugal)
TAPOL: THE INDONESIA HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN (Great Britain)
TASK FORCE INDONESIA (United States of America)